

Free toilet gets reprieve until 2012

BY TOM CARTER

THE Tenderloin CBD voted in June to extend its free bathroom program at Rescue Mission for another six months despite low usage during the 90-day pilot earlier this year that cost the CBD an average \$5 a flush.

The experiment made the toilet available to the public weekdays February through April, 10:30 a.m. to 5:30 p.m. On average, only 11 people a day used it.

As before, the CBD will fund the project with \$1,300 a month for supplies and a toilet monitor, at \$9.79 an hour, to keep order and compile data. To the \$7,800 total the board is adding \$500 this

time for plumbing repairs, to be tapped only if needed. The toilet at 140 Turk St. reopens July 1.

Board President Clint Ladine, a Rescue Mission employee, said he had worried about the lack of repair money in the pilot budget — the mission would have had to handle mechanical problems — so he bought a snake. Ladine used it once on one stoppage, he said. Otherwise, the project went trouble-free.

The CBD's Public Rights of Way Committee that recommended the six months also asked the mission to post the toilet's operating hours and disseminate a flyer with a map on it. No outreach had been done before.

"Folks don't know where it is and when it's open," Dina Hilliard, interim manager, said.

Renting porta-potties to enhance the campaign wasn't discussed. The PROW committee will take that up at its next meeting and also compare the costs of renting a storefront to install a public toilet, Hilliard said later.

In other action, the board approved a 1.5% hike in the annual property assessment for the district's 658 property owners. The committee hadn't raised the assessment in two years and, under its rules, it could have jumped the rate 2.8% per annum, based on the CBD's Consumer Price Index guideline. The hike will add \$14,000 to the roughly \$1 million 2011-12 budget and will help offset buying a sidewalk

cleaning machine for \$80,000.

The search for an executive director is continuing following the resignation of Manager Elaine Zamora in February, when Hilliard, her associate manager, took over as interim head. Compass Point has been hired by the mayor's Office of Economic and Workforce Development to create the job description and conduct a search, survey the nine-member board and train it and the new hire on procedures, roles and management. The deadline for applications is July 5. It could be late August before the board does the hiring, Hilliard said.

Meanwhile, she is trying to get her \$55,000 salary adjusted upward. Zamora started at \$80,000 but was reduced somewhat when Hilliard was hired as her assistant. Hilliard said she voluntarily took on the additional responsibilities without a pay hike until April 1, when a new hire, retitled executive director, was expected. But the process has stretched on.

"In August I don't even know if I'll have a job," Hilliard said.

Her salary was on the agenda but when Ladine announced the board would go into executive session to consider it, OEWD's Trina Villaneuva reminded him that because the agenda didn't state an executive session would be held, according to the Brown Act, the board couldn't take it up. It had to be announced at least 24 hours in advance, she said.

The matter was scheduled for a special session, June 24. ■

OBITUARIES

GREGORY ENGLISH 44 years in San Francisco

Gregory English's sister Gwendolyn and a handful of his friends gathered at the West Hotel on June 14 to remember the former shoe salesman and mechanic who'd lived there only a few months after his nearby residence of more than two decades burned down.

Rev. Glenda Hope officiated at the memorial service in the hotel basement. After some prayers, Monica, a social worker at the hotel, opened the reflections part of the memorial by recalling how "regardless of how he was feeling, one thing he always promised me was some down-home cooking — 'I'm gonna make you some down-home cooking.'"

"He's always going to be in my heart because he was always there when I needed him," one resident said. "He was my buddy, always kind to me."

Gwendolyn English tearfully described how she and Gregory, their mom and a younger brother, Fenton, arrived in California on the Greyhound bus from Shreveport, La., back in 1967 to rejoin her father, Willie, 74, who still lives in Oakland.

"I've been taking care of Gregory all my life," she said, but as his sickle cell anemia had worsened in the last couple of years, she said, "We got extra close."

The siblings were longtime residents of the Franciscan Towers, on the next block of Eddy, and relocated to the West after a fire shuttered that building earlier in the year.

Mr. English's illness had cost him an eye and then a leg. Nonetheless, his sister said, "He was just the type of person that always kept a positive attitude."

Everyone who spoke said that despite the challenges his poor health presented, he was unfailingly smiling and cheerful. Mr. English was 50 when he died, leaving behind his sister, father and two daughters, Adrianna and Kristiana.

Amanda, another hotel resident, recalled them passing time sitting in the sun outside on Eddy Street. "Every once in a while our wheelchairs would get locked together. We were really close!" ■

— MARK HEDIN



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